Walking in the Way of Humanity

Matthew 22:36–40

Cats have their way of life, and dogs have theirs. A cat cannot live like a goat, and a dog cannot live like a horse. Each has its way of life, appointed by God. In the same way, humans have their way of life. The way of humanity was appointed by God, and as long as we walk in it, we can live happily. Human unhappiness arises when we stray from this God-given path. To return to the way of humanity is of utmost importance.

The way that God appointed is not narrow but broad. It allows many choices and is filled with variety. Yet within it lie two fundamental commands: to live in reverence toward God, and to live in love toward others. For those who are separated from God and under the dominion of the devil, however, this broad way feels narrow. That is why Jesus admonished us to enter through the narrow gate and walk the narrow path.

I. Revering God

The first step in the way of humanity is to keep a right relationship with God, our Creator. The Bible expresses this as "loving God." In Japanese, however, it might be better conveyed by words like revering, adoring, or esteeming. It is a deep emotion and a lifestyle rooted in that emotion—something that cannot be captured by a single word.

To revere, fear, worship, thank, serve, trust, and depend upon the God who created and sustains us—this is the most important thing for human beings. We were made as such beings, given life and sustained by Him. To be placed in beautiful nature, to be provided with what we need—these are things for which we give thanks, as we revere the God who so carefully provides for us, and as we rely on His kindness.

Because of human sin and fallenness, our sensitivity toward God has become dull, faint, and vague. Yet thankfully, through the salvation of Jesus Christ and the restoration of our relationship with God, our awareness and knowledge of Him have

been much recovered—though still far from sufficient. In our daily lives, we must learn to sense God more deeply. This is concretely possible, because God Himself has prepared the way.

Let us live always mindful of God, giving thanks in all things. Let us strengthen, heighten, and deepen our awareness of Him. In every matter, let us recognize the hand of God, give thanks, pray, and praise Him. Let us not only rejoice in the beauty of nature, but give thanks to the God who has given it. Let us be grateful even for the heart that allows us to perceive beauty. By recognizing God's care in all things and offering thanks, our spiritual senses will sharpen, and God will become more clearly perceived. Then our faith will gain reality, and our joy, awe, and peace will increase. We will no longer only know with our minds that God loves and protects us—we will experience it.

II. Loving Others

The second step in the way of humanity is for people to love one another. It means wishing for the happiness of our neighbors and striving for it. It means helping and cooperating with one another. Human beings, made in God's image, were originally designed to live in mutual love. We were created to find joy and happiness in harmony. God Himself greatly rejoices in seeing humans live happily in love for one another.

Yet because of sin, human society has become a world of discord. People have valued self-love above neighbor-love. As a result, the world has been disrupted, thrown into confusion and turmoil.

Thankfully, we now share in the salvation of Christ. We know we are greatly loved by God, and we have learned again how to love. We are reminded that from the beginning we were made to love one another, and we are shown how happy it is to live this way. As we experience God's love, our own love is strengthened, and we become able to love. Let us put love into practice more and more. Let us strive to live it out in our daily lives. Then, since we were made in God's image to love, we will become increasingly able to love one another. A world where people love one another is a happy world.

Love grows the more it is used. The more we love, the greater love becomes. By loving even those we find difficult to love, our love grows stronger, enabling us to love even more. Let us live by the life of Christ, who gave Himself for the happiness of humankind. Let us follow His example. Now our love is revived and strengthened by the love of Christ, enabling us to love one another. The power of Christ's love equips us anew to love each other.

We were born as human beings. Let us live as human beings. "Living true to oneself" often leads to selfishness, but living as human beings is far more important.